CHAPTER XXH

THE LUE CONSULATE1

Conspiracies against Bonaparte — The Plot of Niv6se — Bonaparte's Ingenuity — Blunders of the Moderate Republicans — The Tribunate and Legislature Purged — Power of the Senate — Bonaparte's Reticence — The Life Consulate Proposed — Complacency of the Chambers — The Legion of Honor — Lafayette's Withdrawal — Amendments to the Constitution — The Nation Content — Change in the Character of the Army.

THE Consulate was scarcely inaugurated before a dastardly attempt was made to assassinate its head. Early in the year 1800 a remnant of Jacobins, terrorists, and anarchists had formed a conspiracy for this purpose. Their doings, however, were betrayed to Fouche, who watched them in such a way that their organization, though not broken up, was reduced to impotence. Many persons have since believed that the wily minister was holding the pack in hand for his own purposes, and that this notorious Arena-Ceracchi conspiracy, as it was called, had been his own creation for use in case the First Consul should be killed in Italy. It is certain that during the long career of Fouche as minister he never failed to have in readiness some kind of a complot for the eve of each decisive battle in which Napoleon Bonaparte must expose his person and risk

xThe references for this chapter are those already cited; Fi6v6e, Fouch£, Roederer, Musnier-Desclozeaux, Pingaud, Bourrienne. Also, de Martel: Etude sur 1'affairedua niv6se an IX; Fescourt: Histoire de la double conspiration de 1800; Madelin: Fouch6 (publishes many documentary extracts).